

Health of Home and School.

LEAFLET NO. 21.

ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OF MAINE.

Accidents and Emergencies of Childhood.

The purpose of this leaflet is to teach what to do when some accidents and emergencies occur among children. By knowing how to do the right thing promptly, much suffering may be prevented and sometimes life may be saved.

Things accidentally swallowed.

If still in the throat, or you are not sure where it is, quickly explore with the finger and remove any foreign body found there. Articles accidentally swallowed, if they have passed through the gullet, are small enough to go the rest of the way without trouble. If the swallowed article has sharp points or a cutting edge, cathartics should not be given, as the loaded condition of the bowels affords protection to the intestinal walls by coating the article. Sometimes it is advisable to give bulky articles of food like potatoes or other vegetables which leave considerable waste matter in the intestinal canal. If there are no witnesses to the act of swallowing, search in the cradle and elsewhere for the missing things.

Foreign bodies in the windpipe.

If articles have been drawn down into the windpipe, violent coughing suddenly occurs. The foreign body may be expelled by the coughing or fatal suffocation may occur. The doctor should be summoned quickly. In some of these cases, life can be saved only by prompt operation.

Meanwhile a slap on the back between the shoulders with the open hand sometimes aids in the expulsion of the object. If that does not suffice, suddenly reverse the child holding him by the feet suspended while he receives a slap between the shoulders. But if not successful, do not persist. The doctor is what is needed. Occasionally small articles settle down into one of the smaller of the bronchial tubes and considerable irritation or even a local abscess or long lasting illness may result.

Foreign bodies in the nose.

If foreign bodies in the nose cannot be removed by blowing the nose, the expedient of putting a pinch of snuff into the unobstructed nostril, that sneezing may be excited, may be tried. It is inexpedient to resort to unskilful manipulations. The result is usually the pushing of the article farther up into the nose. Better leave it for the doctor to remove. Dried peas or beans which children sometimes push into their noses should be removed as soon as they can be, else their swelling may cause a serious condition and make the removal much more difficult.

Foreign bodies in the ear.

It is more difficult to remove foreign bodies from the ear. If not removed, they may excite an inflammation that may extend to the base of the brain, and unskilled attempts at removal are still more dangerous for the reason that the foreign body is pushed down against the drum of the ear and may even rupture the drum membrane which is only three-fourths of an inch from the surface. If the doctor is not available, the safest way to try to remove the object is by syringing with blood-warm water.

Insects may be drowned or floated from the ear by filling the passage of the ear with warmed olive oil or water.

Foreign bodies in the eye.

Most of the small substances which find their way into the eye may easily be removed. Occasionally a metallic particle or cinder is driven into the membrane which covers the globe of the eye so that it adheres somewhat tenaciously. The child should be restrained from rubbing the eye. Sometimes the particle can be removed by catching the upper lid by the lashes and pulling it away from the eyeball and down over the lower lid, then letting it go so that as it recedes, the under surface of the upper lid is swept by the lashes of the lower lid.

If this does not suffice, the upper lid should be turned upward and backward, that is, inside out, so that it may be seen whether the particle adheres to the under surface of the lid or is attached to the globe of the eye. The upper lid may be everted by seizing the lashes between the thumb and first finger and drawing the edge of the lid away from the eyeball while at the same moment a slender pencil or knitting needle or something of the kind may be placed against the eyelid parallel to the edge of the lid, a third or half an inch above the edge, and then pulling the edge of the lid upward and turning it over by means of the lashes. With a little experience in doing this, it can easily be done, thus exposing a large part of the eyeball and the inner surface of the lid. Any foreign particle found may be removed by brushing it off with the corner of a handkerchief or with the eye-end of the a long darning needle.

Particles of quicklime, or lime during the process of slaking, thrown or spattered into the eye, forms a serious emergency. The quicklime rapidly burns the surface of the globe of the eye and its covering lids resulting in very serious injury unless very quickly removed or neutralized. The eye should be quickly flooded with water and still better neutralized with a few drops of vinegar added to the water. This should be followed by instilling a few drops of olive oil into the eye at short intervals.

Falls.

The great elasticity of the bones of the infant often saves it from serious injuries which would result to older persons. If, in falling, the child strikes upon its head, or if he receives a blow upon the head, it must not too speedily be concluded that no injury has resulted, for serious symptoms may result and they may not develop until some time afterwards. It is better in cases of injuries to the head, to keep the child as quiet as possible for several days thereafter.

Convulsions.

Until the doctor comes, keep the child very quiet and apply ice to the head or sponge the head with cold water. Then roll the body in towels that have been wrung from warm mustard water. Apply the same to the feet and legs. But be careful to keep the mustard from the baby's eyes and remember that the baby's skin is very tender and that particles of mustard floating in the water may easily blister the skin. So, for each quart of water to be used, put one heaping tablespoonful of mustard into a little square of muslin or a thin clean rag, tie it up, and pour the water upon it. Then stir the bag around in the water.

Have ready an abundant supply of hot water and a bath tub so the doctor may give a hot bath if he deems it best to do so. In the excitement, there is danger of having the bath too hot. Its temperature should not be more than 105° F., and if a thermometer is not at hand, the water should be tested by plunging the arm to the elbow into it and letting it remain until assured that the water is not uncomfortably warm. In ten minutes remove the child from the bath, and without drying, wrap quickly in a warm blanket.

In applying the mustard water or the hot bath, be careful not to chill the skin in the least or for a moment.

Have you a full set of these leaflets in your home? If not, get them and keep them.